

In the Claims

Please amend, cancel and add new claims as set forth below.

1. (Currently Amended) A binder strip cassette comprising:
  - a cassette housing;
  - a multiplicity of elongated binder strips, each of said binder strips including a flexible substrate and an heat-activated adhesive disposed on the substrate;
  - a flexible elongated carrier supporting said binder strips, with said binder strips being disposed along a length of the elongated carrier in an end-to-end arrangement, with said elongated carrier and said binder strips being wound to form a binder strip roll;
  - a layer of pressure sensitive adhesive intermediate the binder strip substrates and the carrier, with the layer of pressure sensitive adhesive being disposed along less than a total length of each of the binder strip substrates;
  - a mounting mechanism which rotatably mounts the binder strip roll within the cassette housing;
  - a drive apparatus for unwinding the binder strip roll to provide an unwound portion of the binder strip roll;
  - ~~a separating apparatus disposed within the cassette housing~~ for separating the binder strips from the elongated carrier of the unwound portion of the binder strip roll to produce a separated binder strip, with the unwinding by the drive apparatus causing ~~the separated~~ a binder strip to be at least partially ejected through a binder strip eject opening in the cassette housing.
2. (Previously Presented) The binder strip cassette of Claim 1 wherein the separating apparatus includes a separating member which receives the elongated carrier along an input path and outputs the elongated carrier along an output path, with said input path and said output path being disposed at an angle relative to one another such that one of the binder strips on the carrier begins to separate from the carrier when the carrier changes movement from the input to the output path.

3. (Previously Presented) The binder strip cassette of Claim 2 wherein the drive apparatus includes a take up roller disposed within the cassette housing, which receives the elongated carrier after the elongated carrier has passed the separating member.

4. (Currently Amended) The binder strip cassette of Claim 3 wherein the drive apparatus includes a drive connection to the take up roller so that the take up roller can be rotatably driven by a drive source external to the cassette housing and wherein each of the binder strips first exits the binder strip cassette at a leading end of the binder strip which is followed by a trailing end of the binder strip, with the pressure sensitive adhesive being absent from at least 20% of a total length of the binder strip at the trailing end of each of the binder strips.

5. (Currently Amended) The binder strip cassette of Claim [[4]] 1 further including a guide mechanism positioned to guide the unwound portion from the binder strip roll to the separating apparatus along a guide path.

6. (Previously presented) The binder strip cassette of Claim 5 wherein the guide mechanism includes an idle roller mounted for rotation within the cassette housing.

7. (Currently Amended) The binder strip cassette of Claim 5 wherein the guide mechanism includes a guide member that engages the unwound portion of the binder strip roll and causes the unwound portion to move between first and second spaced apart points on the guide path, with that part of the guide path between the first and second points being non-linear .

8. (Currently Amended) The binder strip cassette of Claim 7 where the first point is proximate the binder strip roll wherein the guide member is an elongated guide

member having a first portion that engages the unwound portion of the binder strip roll and a second portion that engages a wound portion of the binder strip roll.

9. (Currently Amended) The binder strip cassette of Claim 8 wherein the ~~guide mechanism includes an~~ the first portion of the elongated guide member ~~having a first contact member that engages the binder strip roll proximate the first point is movable so that the guide member continues to contact the wound portion of the binder strip roll as the roll is depleted.~~

10. (Currently Amended) The binder strip cassette of Claim 9 wherein the ~~first [[element]]~~ portion of the elongated guide member is captured between the binder strip roll and the unwound portion of the binder strip roll.

11. (Currently Amended) The binder strip cassette of Claim 10 wherein the binder strips and elongated carrier are positioned relative to one another on the binder strip roll such that the elongated carrier is positioned on an exterior of said binder strip roll and ~~wherein the first element includes a first surface which engages the elongated carrier on the binder strip roll and a second surface opposite the first surface which engages binder strips on the unwound portion.~~

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) The binder strip cassette of Claim [[14]] 10 wherein the elongated guide member is pivotally mounted ~~to permit the movement at a location on the guide member displaced from said first and second guide member portions so~~

that said first portion of the elongated guide member can continue to engage wound portion of the binder strip roll as the binder strip roll is depleted.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Previously Presented) The binder strip cassette of Claim 1 wherein said elongated carrier includes encoded information regarding the binder strip roll and wherein the encoded information is readable from a location external to the cassette housing.

18. (Previously Presented) The binder strip cassette of Claim 17 where the encoded information is optically encoded information and wherein the cassette housing includes an opening by which the elongated carrier passes so that the encoded information can be read through the opening.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Currently Amended) A binder strip cassette comprising:

    a cassette housing;

    a binder strip roll comprising layers of binder strips separated by layers of a flexible elongated carrier, wherein the binder strips of the binder strip roll are not adhered to the elongated carrier;

    a mounting mechanism which rotatably mounts the binder strip roll within the cassette housing;

    a drive apparatus for unwinding the binder strip roll to provide an unwound portion of the binder strip roll;

    a separating apparatus disposed within the cassette housing for separating the binder strips from the elongated carrier of the unwound portion of the binder

strip roll to produce a separated binder strip, with the unwinding by the drive apparatus causing the separated binder strip to be at least partially ejected through a binder strip eject opening in the cassette housing.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Currently Amended) The binder strip cassette of Claim [[22]] 21 further including a guide mechanism ~~disposed so as to apply a coupling force to the unwound portion of the binder strip roll at least at one point along a guide path between the binder strip roll and the separating apparatus so as to bias the binder strip and elongated carrier together for guiding the unwound portion of the binder strip roll from the wound portion of the binder strip roll to the separating apparatus, with the guide mechanism including an elongated guide member having a first portion which engages the unwound portion of the binder strip roll.~~

24. (Currently Amended) The binder strip cassette of Claim 23 wherein the ~~at least one point includes a first point proximate the binder strip roll elongated guide member is movable so that the first portion continues to engage the unwound portion of the binder strip roll as the binder strip roll is depleted.~~

25. (Currently Amended) The binder strip cassette of Claim 24 wherein the ~~coupling force is applied along substantially the entire guide path elongated guide member is pivotably mounted at a location displaced from the first portion.~~

26. (Currently Amended) The binder strip cassette of Claim 25 wherein ~~the guide mechanism includes an elongated guide member having a contact member that is captured between the wound and unwound portions of the binder strip roll and the unwound portion.~~

27. (Currently Amended) The binder strip cassette of Claim 26 wherein the elongated carrier and the binder strips are positioned relative to one another on the roll such that the elongated carrier is disposed on an exterior portion of the roll and ~~wherein the contact member contacts the elongated carrier of the wound portion of the binder strip roll.~~

28. (Cancelled)

29. (Currently Amended) A binder strip cassette comprising:

    a cassette housing;

    a binder strip roll comprising layers of binder strips separated by layers of a flexible elongated carrier;

    a mounting mechanism which rotatably mounts the binder strip roll within the cassette housing;

    a drive apparatus for unwinding the binder strip roll to provide an unwound portion of the binder strip roll;

    a take up roller disposed within the cassette housing;

    a separating apparatus disposed within the cassette housing for separating the binder strips from the elongated carrier of the unwound portion of the binder strip roll to produce a separated binder strip, with the unwinding by the drive apparatus causing the separated binder strip to be at least partially ejected through a binder strip eject opening in the cassette housing and with the elongated carrier of the unwound portion being wound around the take up roller; and

a guide mechanism to assist in guiding the unwound portion of the binder strip roll towards the separating apparatus, said guide mechanism including a guide member which is movable with respect to the cassette housing and which engages the wound binder strip roll as the wound binder strip roll is depleted.

30. (Previously Presented) The binder strip cassette of Claim 29 wherein the drive apparatus includes a connector on the take up roller so that the take up roller can be rotationally driven by a drive source external to the cassette housing.

31. (Previously Presented) The binder strip cassette of Claim 30 further including optical encoding disposed on the elongated carrier and wherein the cassette housing includes an opening positioned such that the encoding can be read by a reader external to the housing.

32. (Previously Presented) The binder strip cassette of Claim 31 wherein the housing opening is positioned such that the optical encoding can be read on the elongated carrier as the carrier moves from the separating apparatus to the take up roller.

33. (New) The binder strip cassette of Claim 29 wherein the first portion of the guide member is disposed intermediate the wound and unwound portions of the binder strip roll.

34. (New) The binder strip cassette of Claim 33 wherein the guide member is pivotably mounted at a location on the guide mechanism displaced from the first portion of the elongated member.